

UNDER THE SURFACE: JULY REFLECTIONS ON MIND & BODY

Your Monthly Dose of Wellness, Growth and Support

Welcome friends!

July invites us to embrace the slower pace of summer, making space to rest, recharge, and reconnect with the habits that support our well-being. While the season often brings more time outdoors and opportunities to unwind, many people continue to navigate challenges that aren't always visible beneath the surface.

This month, we're shining a light on hidden mental compulsions and the invisible ways they can affect daily life. We'll also explore migraines, looking beyond common "trigger" myths to better understand what may really be contributing to symptoms. Alongside these topics, we'll share gentle movement ideas, magnesium-rich foods that help support a calmer nervous system, a refreshing summer salad recipe, and a collection of clinician-recommended resources to support your mental and physical health.

Here's to finding balance this summer through greater awareness, compassionate self-care, and simple practices that help both mind and body thrive.

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MENTAL HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

The Invisible Struggle: What Are Hidden Mental Compulsions?

Most people picture OCD as visible rituals: washing hands repeatedly, checking door locks, arranging objects in precise patterns. But a significant and often overlooked part of the disorder plays out entirely inside the mind, invisible to everyone, sometimes even to the person experiencing it.

These are called mental compulsions: repetitive internal acts such as mentally reviewing conversations, silently counting, praying in a specific sequence, or mentally replacing a "bad" thought with a "good" one, performed in response to anxious or intrusive thoughts. Research confirms they are extremely common. A 2024 cross-sectional study published in Cureus found that mental compulsions were present in over 50% of people diagnosed with OCD. A separate study of 201 individuals found that every participant reported at least one mental compulsion or internal reassurance-seeking behaviour when these were specifically assessed.

Because these rituals leave no outward trace, they are easy to miss even in a clinical setting. People often endure them for years without knowing what they are or without realizing that effective treatment exists.

Common hidden compulsions include:

- Mentally replaying events to check for mistakes or harm
- Silently counting, praying, or repeating phrases until it "feels right"
- Seeking internal reassurance that a feared outcome won't happen
- Replacing distressing thoughts with "neutralizing" thoughts
- Analyzing one's own feelings or motivations excessively



The good news is that evidence-based treatment works. Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) therapy, the gold-standard treatment for OCD, is effective for mental compulsions, though it requires a clinician experienced in identifying and addressing these less visible forms. Approximately two in three people experience clinically meaningful improvement with ERP.

If any of this resonates, you are not alone, and you don't have to keep managing it in silence. Read our full blog post to learn more, or reach out to our team at Reflective Soul today.

→ [Read the full blog post.](#)

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HEALTH SPOTLIGHT

Are Your "Migraine Triggers" Really Triggers?

BY DR. ALI MCMILLAN, BSC. ND



If you live with migraines, you've probably spent years trying to identify what causes them. Chocolate? Stress? Weather? Red wine?

What if many of the things you've been blaming aren't actually triggers at all?

Our understanding of migraines has changed dramatically over the last decade. We now know that what many people think are triggers may actually be early warning signs that a migraine has already begun. This shift in thinking is helping patients better understand their migraines and find treatments that actually work.

In the newest blog, I explore:

- The surprising difference between migraine triggers and prodrome symptoms
- Why tracking your migraines is one of the most powerful tools you have
- The lifestyle factors that really matter

If migraines are interfering with your work, family, or quality of life, this article is a great place to start.

[Read the full blog here: Understanding Migraines: A Modern Perspective](#)



WELLNESS SPOTLIGHT

Move to Soothe: Gentle Movement & Magnesium-Rich Eating for Calmer Summer Days

When your mind is working overtime, whether through racing thoughts or the buildup to a migraine, your body often needs gentle, not punishing, support. This month we're focusing on low-impact movement (think walking, swimming, restorative yoga, qigong) that calms an overactive nervous system without adding stress, paired with magnesium and riboflavin-rich foods shown to support both mood regulation and migraine prevention. Small, sustainable shifts in how you move and eat can quiet the static in both body and brain.

NUTRITION SPOTLIGHT

CALM-THE-SYSTEM SPINACH & AVOCADO SALAD

A magnesium and riboflavin-rich salad designed to support nervous system regulation and migraine prevention easy enough for a weeknight, nourishing enough to feel intentional.

Serving for 2

- 4 cups baby spinach
- 1 ripe avocado, sliced
- 1/3 cups pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 2 tablespoons tahini
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 tablespoons warm water
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 0.3 teaspoons sea salt
- 2 tablespoons dark chocolate (70%+), chopped

Directions

1. Whisk the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together 2 tablespoons tahini, 1 lemon, juiced, 2 tablespoons warm water, 1 garlic clove, minced, and 0.3 teaspoons sea salt until smooth and creamy. Add more water, a teaspoon at a time, if too thick.
2. Assemble the base: In a large bowl, combine 4 cups baby spinach and 1 cup cooked quinoa.
3. Add toppings: Top with 1 ripe avocado, sliced, 0.3 cups pumpkin seeds, and 2 tablespoons dark chocolate (70%+), chopped.
4. Dress and serve: Drizzle the tahini dressing over the salad just before serving and toss gently.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Looking For A Good Tool? Check These Out...

Books:

- **The Imp of the Mind**- Author Lee Baer
- **Brain Lock**- Author Jeffrey Schwartz
- **"Pure O" OCD**- Author Chad LeJeune
- **The Migraine Brain**- Author Carolyn Bernstein
- **Heal Your Headache**- Author David Buchholz

Apps:

- [NOCD for OCD & Compulsions](#)
- [Migraine Buddy - Symptom Tracker](#)

